

MICHIGAN LEgwork

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

JANUARY 2006

February 3 Is Last Day at DLEG

Director Hollister to Head Economic Development Collaborative

DLEG DIRECTOR DAVID C. HOLLISTER announced earlier this month that he will be leaving his position effective Feb. 3 to head a new nonprofit regional economic development collaborative that will work to diversify mid-Michigan.

The director said he was asked to accept the position by Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon, Lansing Community College President Paula Cunningham and Lansing Mayor Virgil Bernero on behalf of local business, labor, education and regional leaders.

"It was hard for me to say 'no' to this exciting new opportunity," Director Hollister said. "Of particular interest to me is bringing together mid-Michigan's strategic assets to become a center for research, development, commercialization and production of biomass materials as well as become the epicenter of leadership for the post-petroleum economy. The governor challenged the state to do this in her 2005 State of the State address, and in my new role I hope to help the governor and the region achieve this."

The collaborative, to be called Prima Civitas — Latin for "first city," will be a 501c3 agency seeking to leverage the area's assets in higher education and K-12, auto and other manufacturing, agriculture, and emerging life science and information technology sectors to build a new economy.

Governor Granholm, who, along with President Simon, appeared with Director Hollister at a media roundtable Jan. 4, said, "Dave Hollister has been a driving force in our efforts to strengthen and diversify Michigan's economy, and I am indebted for all he has given this administration in the past three years. I share his pride in the milestones we have achieved despite limited resources. I consider it the ultimate endorsement of our agenda that two initiatives we have embraced and promoted — alternative energy and regional collaboration and cooperation — are at the heart of his next venture."

The governor was informed of Director Hollister's decision before the December holidays, and names for his replacement are already under consideration.

A former teacher, county commissioner, and legislator before becoming mayor of Lansing in 1994, Director Hollister was asked by Gov. Granholm to join her team as director of the Department of Consumer & Industry Services in January 2003. He was instrumental in creating the Department of Labor & Economic Growth, which officially opened Dec. 8, 2003.



Participating in the media roundtable in Lansing Jan. 4 were MSU President Lou Anna Simon (left), DLEG Director David C. Hollister and Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm.

In his resignation letter to Gov. Granholm, Director Hollister said, "I take pride in what we have achieved together. We have created a dynamic new department, assembled a management team second to none, developed a comprehensive economic revitalization plan, initiated creative new programs, and led or participated in 38 innovative interdepartmental collaborations that have fundamentally changed how state government does business. We accomplished these milestones despite limited resources."

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2) Director's Message
- 8) Mentor a Child
- 7) Special Luncheon
- 10) Charitable Acts



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A Message from the Director

In my final *Michigan LEGwork* message to all of you, I would like to re-emphasize the sentiments I shared with you on Jan. 4, when I made the announcement that I would be leaving our department to head up a nonprofit regional economic development organization.

This offer to lead an entity that centers on two of the things I feel most passionately about — economic development and my mid-Michigan roots — was just too attractive to pass up. It also means that I will have an opportunity to continue to contribute to Gov. Granholm's statewide economic development vision and plan.

At year's end, the governor noted that significant progress was made in 2005 toward bolstering and diversifying our economy. This was particularly so during the month of November, when the \$2 billion 21st Century Jobs for Michigan Fund was created that will invest in high-tech industries and create tens of thousands of jobs that will keep our children in Michigan.

In addition, a bill calling for \$600 million in tax cuts and incentives for Michigan manufacturers was signed into law to help keep jobs and create jobs in our state. Also, the MI Opportunity Partnership matched nearly 18,000 unemployed workers with jobs during 2005, and we are continuing its mission into 2006.

The downside to my decision to step down as director is that I will be leaving all of you, who have been an integral part of all that we accomplished in 2005, as well as over the past three years.

However, I will be fully engaged until I leave and will always be proud to have worked with you. I also trust you will carry on the very important mission we established together. Thank you for your hard work and dedication and for epitomizing the best in public service.

On a sad closing note, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Robert White, a counselor with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, who died Dec. 18. Bob was only 57, reminding us once again how fragile life is.

My warmest wishes to you for a safe, happy and productive 2006.

Sincerely,

Robert White of MRS Passes Away

We are saddened to report that Robert (Bob) White, a long-time counselor at the Adrian office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), died of a massive heart attack on Dec. 18. He was 57.

Bob had lived in Adrian for the past 31 years, working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in assisting persons with disabilities to prepare for and find employment. His obituary stated, "All his life he noticed and helped those in need."

Bob was a graduate of Michigan State University, where he had also earned a master's degree.

He was preceded in death by his father, Paul, in 1987. Surviving are his mother, Irene Todd White of Lansing, and brother, Gary White of Mt. Pleasant.

January Is a Great Time to Give Blood

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) is sponsoring an American Red Cross blood drive from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 26, in Room L-500, Cadillac Place, Detroit.

"All of those who attempt to donate at this drive will have their names entered in a drawing for a trip for two to Orlando!" said Val Congdon, UIA blood drive coordinator. The individual who wins the drawing will receive round trip transportation for two plus accommodations in Orlando.

Two at UIA's Grand Rapids RICC Recognized at Red Cross News Conference

Last fall, Michigan's major blood collection agencies contacted Michigan's Surgeon General and issued a State Employee Blood Drive Challenge with the hopes of increasing blood donations by state employees. The challenge is to increase state employee donations by 20 percent over one year and to cultivate lifetime blood donors.

"Before the challenge was issued, a cross-match was done of state employees who have generously participated in past blood drives," said Marianne Holst, manager of the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC) in Grand Rapids, "and two of our staff were recognized! They are Mary Davis and Sue Wood."



Sue Wood (left) and Mary Davis, both unemployment insurance examiners at UIA's Grand Rapids RICC, were recognized for their participation in American Red Cross blood drives.

As a result of that cross-match, Mary and Sue were invited to participate in a news conference that was held in October at the American Red Cross Blood Center in Lansing.

A Thank You to Volunteers and Donors

By Lori Parr, Department of Treasury

I would like to express my thanks for another rewarding year of saving lives. Without you, it would be very difficult to do what we do, but as a team we work very well. Just to give you an idea of the impact you make, we have five drives per year just at the Ottawa Building and, on average, 70 donors per drive. This totals 350 donations of one unit of blood. Multiply 350 by three, because three is the number of lives saved by one unit of blood. This means we potentially save 1,050 lives in one year.

Fifteen volunteers are located in several state buildings downtown [Lansing] who help me post materials two weeks before each 56-day drive to let donors know that it's time to make an appointment and whom to contact. Also, on the day of each drive, posters and arrows are hung that help donors, Red Cross staff and volunteers find their way to the location. These volunteers also help with unloading and loading the American Red Cross truck and tearing down and setting up the three conference rooms used. There are usually eight to 10 nurses and five to seven volunteers who take your blood and feed you cookies and juice. Also, there is the coordination of the facilities manager, dock manager and security at the Ottawa building.

Oh, and don't forget the Peckham staff who bring the big trash containers for the huge amount of trash. And last but not least, many thanks to our employer for allowing us to use state facilities for donating and for allowing us to donate at work and use the state email system for communication of this humanitarian effort. I am truly blessed and thankful. Please remember to check the website for a donation location near you at <http://www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge> for another wonderful year in 2006.

Q & A

Q: Can a state employee use school/community participation leave for donating blood?

A: Available school/community participation leave may be used by any non-represented employee and any union employee whose bargaining unit contract has a provision for school and/or community participation leave. The use of such leave must have prior supervisory approval.

People on the Move



Tom Byrne



Reid Williams



Jodie Gillespie

Very best wishes to **Chris Gurniez**, who retired from the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) in early December after 31 years of state service. Chris was a departmental technician in UI Benefit Procedures. Chief among her duties was serving as the clearance coordinator, for which she obtained approvals from various agency units for new UI procedures and releases before they were issued agency wide. She also maintained and updated procedures, field releases and claims advices that appear on UIA's intranet.

Happy and healthy retirement wishes to **Richard Mee**, safety manager, Construction Safety and Health Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), who retired Dec. 31. Rick began his MIOSHA career as a construction safety officer in 1973 and served in that position for 17 years. He then served two and a half years as assistant division chief, and in 1993 became chief of the Construction Safety Division. After the reorganization of MIOSHA in 2003, Rick was reassigned as the safety manager in the new Construction Safety and Health Division. Rick is well respected for his help in developing MIOSHA's fall protection, excavation and residential initiatives to reduce fatalities.

Congratulations to **Bob Johnson**, senior executive assistant director, DLEG Executive Office, who has been named director of Planning and Neighborhood Development for the City of Lansing, effective Jan. 2. Bob had worked for the city from 2001 to 2003 as chief of staff for then-Lansing Mayor David C. Hollister, now outgoing DLEG director.

The Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) is pleased to welcome **Carrie Martin** as secretary for both the DeafBlind Unit and Independent Living Program staff in Lan-

sing. Carrie had worked in the Office of Career and Technical Preparation as a secretary in the Grant Planning and Program Improvement Unit. Even though she liked her previous job, she pursued the MCB position because of her interest in MCB programs and her interest in signing.

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has recently tapped three new managers and an audit specialist for Internal Benefit Services. **Yukima Everett** is the new manager of the Benefit Accuracy Measurement/Denied Claim Accuracy Unit. She has more than 20 years of UIA experience, most of which has been in the Investigation Section. Most recently, she had been a manager at the Detroit

Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC). **Pat Laban** is the new manager of the Employer Filed Claims Unit. He has worked with UIA for 15 years, most recently in the Multi-Claimant Unit.

Cherie Kearns now heads the UI Benefit Procedures area. She started with the UI program 26 years ago as a counter clerk at the former Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) office in Ann Arbor. She went on to become a claims examiner and lead worker at a number of MESC offices and the Detroit RICC. **Kareem Garba** is the new audit specialist overseeing the Tax Performance System. With UIA since 1994, Kareem has been an internal auditor, performing a variety of audit assignments. For the past five years, he has conducted risk analyses for UIA's benefit and tax programs.

Congratulations to **Jodie Gillespie**, Corporation Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, who has accepted the position of development manager for the Michigan Regional Skills Alliance (MiRSA), Bureau of Workforce Development.

Congratulations to **Melissa Brown** on her promotion to a Secretary 9 position with the Office of Financial and Insurance Services, Mortgage Banking and Consumer Finance. Melissa was formerly with the Consultation, Education and Training Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) has welcomed **Jayne Szukalowski** to the Consultation, Education and Training Division. Jayne is the new safety consultant serving the Grand Rapids area. She has more than eight years of occupational safety and health experience. MIOSHA also

welcomes **Myrtis Dabney** to the General Industry Safety and Health Division as a communications assistant. Myrtis comes from the Secretary of State's office and has 28 years of experience.

The Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) welcomes **Beth DeWaters** as the school's new clinical social worker in the Health Services Department. Beth was previously employed with Child and Family Psychological Services in Kalamazoo.

The Licensing Division of the Bureau of Commercial Services has welcomed two new staff to its team. **Tom Byrne**, previously with the Michigan Broadband Development Authority, is the new manager of the Testing and Education Services Unit. **Reid Williams** is the Licensing Division's new word processing assistant in the Cosmetology/Barber/Appraisers Unit.



UIA staff on the move are, seated l. to r., Yukima Everett and Cherie Kearns, and standing, Pat Laban and Kareem Garba.



Yvette Robinson

Yvette Robinson Pays Tribute to Veterans with Her Art

Congratulations to Yvette Robinson, a departmental analyst with the Bureau of Commercial Services, whose exhibit honoring the U. S. military from all wars and their families was on display at the East

Lansing Public Art Gallery Dec. 18 through Jan. 5.

Yvette's exhibit, "A Tribute: I Will Never Forget," contained poster collages and wood panels and figures as well as a centerpiece called "The Fallen Soldier," which consisted of a pair of boots, desert-camouflaged helmet, and an imitation M-16 rifle, all framed by poppies, roses and a copy of the poem "Immortality."

The exhibit was well received by the community, especially veterans. The *Lansing State Journal* carried an article and photos.

Yvette is chair of the East Lansing Public Art Gallery and is vice chair of the East Lansing Arts Commission.



Included in Yvette's exhibit were her "ClothesPinPeople," military men made out of clothespins.

Shaun Thomas Has 'Baptism Under Fire' in New Unemployment Insurance Agency Position

By Norm Isotalo

When Shaun Thomas was recently named senior project manager at the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), he was immediately given a baptism under fire.

As the agency's senior project manager, he reports to UIA Director Sharon Bommarito, and among his new duties, he oversees major agency projects.

As a result, Shaun was placed in charge of setting up the agency's mini call center operation to take phone applications for unemployment benefits from Louisiana workers left jobless by Hurricane Katrina.

The U.S. Department of Labor had asked Michigan and six other states if they could help take these calls. Within a week, the agency, under Shaun's direction, identified staff to work in the call center, conducted training for these staff, set up the phone connections with the special toll-free phone number to handle the claims, worked out details with the Louisiana agency for UIA staff to use their website for data entering claims, and began taking claims.

Fortunately, Shaun is no stranger to the unemployment insurance program. Prior to assuming his new post, he was manager of the UI Benefit Procedures Unit and a former analyst within the unit. He began working with the UI program in 1992 as a claims examiner at the former Livonia branch office. He has also worked as an examiner in the Benefit Detection/Determination Unit.

Shaun holds a bachelor of science degree in psychology from Wayne State University.



Shaun Thomas

Michigan Commission for the Blind Presents 2005 Achievement Awards

**By Susan Turney, Michigan Commission
for the Blind**

to sewing. Teletha Crawley was Mamie's MCB counselor.



Carolyn Houston

The Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) presented the 2005 MCB Achievement Awards during its December commission meeting in East Lansing. The awards are presented annually to MCB clients for excellence in achieving their goals for employment and/or independent living. Awards are also presented to exemplary employers and organizations that have worked in partnership with MCB. The award recipients:

Carolyn Houston of Flint received an Achievement Honor Roll Award. When she began working part-time at Sam's Club, she worried that her vision loss might limit her ability to work. MCB assisted Carolyn by providing computer screen text enlargement software, glasses, and computer training, which helped her to maintain her employment and transition into full-time work at Sam's Club as a product demonstrator. Carolyn's MCB counselor was Debbie Wilson.



Jose Moreno

Mamie Louisa Moore of Detroit received an Achievement Honor Roll Award. She was a professional seamstress until she lost her vision due to glaucoma. She thought she would never sew again. Last year through MCB she received instruction in mobility and using a white cane. She attended a weeklong MCB "Mini Adjustment Seminar" to begin learning skills of blindness and then enrolled at the MCB Training Center in Kalamazoo for eight months. Mamie's new skills have allowed her to be independent in her home and community and to return

Jose Moreno of Holland received an Achievement Honor Roll Award. He is both deaf and blind as a result of Usher Syndrome. He became an MCB client while in high school. MCB staff provided services and funding to help him attend summer training at the Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf/Blind and successfully complete high school. He then attended a nine-month program at Northern Illinois University and completed training at the MCB Training Center in Kalamazoo. He was accepted into the cabinetmaking program at the Michigan Career and Technical Institute — the first DeafBlind student to enroll. Within four months of graduation, Jose was offered a job with Great Lakes Woods in Holland, where he is highly regarded by his employer and co-workers. Jose's MCB counselor was Cindy Caldwell.

Don Pablo's restaurant in Flint received an Employer Honor Roll Award. The business has been open to developing employment opportunities for MCB clients, and three individuals were hired during the last fiscal year. This employer has shown an ongoing cooperative approach that benefits both the business and its employees.

Community Connections in Flint received a Community Partner Honor Roll Award. A part of Michigan Community Services, Community Connections has been very effective in placing MCB clients into employment as well as providing long-term follow-up services. The organization has also assisted MCB in providing independent living skills training to clients.

Burney Johnson Named MSHDA Deputy

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) is pleased to welcome its new deputy director, Burney Johnson, who most recently was director of planning activities for the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department. Burney has 25 years of experience in planning and policy development in both Northern California and Southeast Michigan. She has been serving as co-chair of the Detroit Partnership and is a leader in the development of Detroit's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. A graduate of Fisk University, she has a master's degree in urban planning from Wayne State University.



Mamie Louisa Moore



Burney Johnson

Culinary Arts Students at MCTI Display Talents at Special Luncheon

The Michigan Career & Technical Institute's Culinary Arts training program had an opportunity to show off its talents Dec. 15, when DLEG Director David C. Hollister and a number of DLEG employees visited MCTI for a special luncheon.

The occasion was the department's sixth luncheon in 2005 honoring DLEG staff who had been nominated for Special Deliveries from the Director. Because of time constraints and long distances, Director Hollister is not able to present each Special Delivery himself. The events are a chance for those honored to meet the director in person.

The luncheons usually consist of pizza and pop, but the Dec. 15 one was different and definitely the best, Director Hollister said.

Culinary Arts instructors Carol Anderson, Jane Norton and Sue DeHaan led their students in creating and serving a luncheon that one would find at an upscale restaurant. The diners had their choice of simmered beef brisket with horseradish sauce or vegetarian chili over a baked sweet potato. Also on the menu were roasted red potatoes with fresh rosemary, glazed Brussels sprouts and baby carrots, lettuce wedge with sauce gribiche, and ice cream pie.

Honored at the luncheon were Michigan Rehabilitation Services staffers Tim Allgor, John Bosker, Leslie Dewberry, Donna English, Deborah Forsyth, Jim Hall, Linn Kempf, Melissa Mackinder,



Serving the Dec. 15 luncheon were MCTI Culinary Arts students (l. to r.) Darrold Dawson, Becky Ogden, Felicia Cook, Amy Williams, Heather Smith and William Reid.

Annie Minshall, Dawn Peevers, Vicki Rafferty, Nancy Terry, Allah Jean Truman, Tammi Tuttle and Connie Vandepolder; Tom Hagan, Liquor Control Commission; and Unemployment Insurance Agency staffers Heriberto Alvarado, Marianne Holst and Sheila Walker.

A special thank you goes to Linda Cook, Media and Public Relations, for planning and coordinating the luncheons.

UIA's Paul Denean Taps Out a Different Beat

**By Bill DiSessa,
Unemployment Insurance Agency**

"Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys. Let them be unemployment compensation managers and such."

With apologies to the Waylon Jennings/Willie Nelson song, if you're Paul Denean, manager of the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Employer Customer Relations Hotline and Multi-Claimant units, you can be both a cowboy and an unemployment compensation manager.

As drummer for the Northern Kreek Band, Paul recently provided the backbeat for the recording of country music artist Je'Ne West's

"What Cowgirls Do," a new 11-song CD that is in production and due out soon.

The taping occurred at Abbey Road Music in Nashville. The band also made a promotional video produced by Music Row Video.

Let's hope Paul and band "make a mash," which is cowboy-speak for making a hit and impressing people.



From Multi-Claimant to Multi-Platinum?
Paul Denean poses with country music artist Je'Ne West.



Step Forward to Mentor a Child

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has declared January Mentoring Month and is calling on people around the state to step forward and mentor children in their community.

“Mentoring transforms the lives of children and adults,” the governor said. “By strengthening our children through mentoring, we are building a stronger future for them, our communities and our great state.”

As attorney general, she created the Mentor Michigan Initiative, which is now lead by First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern. Mentor Michigan is a statewide effort to raise awareness of the need for mentors and the benefits associated with mentoring. As a result of the initiative, organizations across the state are coming together to encourage people to mentor a child.

The governor and first gentleman mentor children from the Lansing area and are among the 99 percent of mentors who would recommend mentoring to others.

“Mentoring is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have” the first gentleman said.

“Our experience with mentoring has enriched our family's life as well as the lives of our mentees.”

He is urging men, particularly men of color, to step forward to mentor children in Michigan.

The first gentleman cited a recent study released by Kahle Research Solutions, Inc., that showed only 33 percent of mentors in Michigan are men. The study also showed that while 36 percent of the mentees are children of color, only 24 percent of the mentors are people of color. This disparity creates a dilemma for mentoring programs trying to match children with mentors from the same ethnic and gender backgrounds.

“Mentoring programs from across the state have expressed the desire to put the ‘men’ back in mentoring,” the first gentleman said. “Many programs are not enrolling boys because there are no male mentors available. This is a missed opportunity for everyone who stands to benefit from mentoring.”

For more information, call 1-800-VOLUNTEER or visit <http://www.mentormichigan.org>.

The January edition of DLEG's cable program “Consumer's Corner” will be guest hosted by First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern and focus on the rewards of mentoring. Please visit <http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/consumerscorner/> for show times and dates. The program will air statewide through early February.



Doug Spade and Mike Clement

Disability Agency Hosts Staff of State's New Supplier Diversity Program

DLEG's Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) has become the worksite for a former state representative and his assistant who have taken on the job of ensuring that people with disabilities have access to business opportunities with the state.

Former State Rep. Doug Spade and Mike Clement, both of Adrian, are staffing the Department of Management and Budget's new Supplier Diversity Program. Doug is the new supplier diversity liaison, and Mike is a supplier diversity analyst.

The two are being housed in the MCDC suite at the Victor building in Lansing to capitalize on MCDC's disability resources, including its many partnerships in the disability community. Their mission is to increase the amount of business the state does with firms owned by people with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities.

“MCDC is excited to be a partner in this important initiative,” said MCDC Executive Director Duncan Wyeth. “We are particularly pleased that Doug and Mike are being housed in our office because their work will complement and enhance our mission of increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.”

The Supplier Diversity Program was created as part of Public Acts 90 and 91 of 2005 and is jointly funded by the Departments of Management and Budget, Labor & Economic Growth, and Transportation.

Cubicles, Mini Trees Help Make the Season Bright

Decorating miniature trees and your very own cubicle in holiday attire has become a DLEG tradition. At the Ottawa Building in Lansing, the Fun Committee sponsored a contest for best-decorated cubicle as well as best-decorated tree.

Todd McMyler, Office of Financial and Insurance Services, captured first prize in the cubicle contest for his rendition of Santa Claus climbing down a chimney. Only Santa's hat and mittens could be seen from the top of the paper brick chimney, with boots and a large sack of toys nearby.

Jennifer Farr, Office of Human Resources, won second place by creating a fireplace from felt, complete with stockings and a mantel topped with candles. Mittens spelled out Merry Christmas, and miniature mittens, hearts and stars strung about the walls completed the warm scene.

Holly Mroz, Office of Financial and Insurance Services, took third place with handmade snowflakes and a red and silver color scheme. Holly cut out 160 individual snowflakes to give her office a snowfall effect. "No two snowflakes are alike," she said, "just like real ones."

Jennifer Farr won first place in the miniature tree contest with her "Old Fashioned Christmas Tree," a tribute to simpler times as described by her parents, she said. Garlands of real popcorn and of cranberries made from wood graced the tree, as did plain wooden spool ornaments, cotton ribbons with the word "Believe," and candle ornaments made from miniature spoons, clothespins and tiny candles.

Lynne Breen, Media and Public Relations, took second place with a tree called "Jack Frost Nipping at Your Nose — Celebrating the Scents and Sense of the Season." Twelve red, green and gold sachet bags filled with the shavings of 12 differently scented candles — including holly, balsam, cookies and chestnuts — rested on the boughs and were accented by 12 miniature snowmen.

Bobbi Woods, Internal Audit and Monitoring, placed third with her tree called "It's a Season of Giving." The tree was decorated with red and gold garlands and toy ornaments, with several gifts at the base.

DLEG staff at the Victor building served as judges for both contests.



Todd McMyler in his winning cubicle



Jennifer Farr with her first-place miniature tree

Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center

Annual Auction Raises \$2,200 for Charities

By Lynne Hall, Michigan Commission for the Blind

Continuing a decade-old tradition, the staff at the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center held their annual holiday auction Dec. 13, with all proceeds going to local charities. This year the event raised \$2,200 for First Presbyterian Health Clinic in Kalamazoo, which provides free medical and dental services to local residents without health care coverage, and Borgess Visiting Nurses, which provides home health care throughout Southwest Michigan.

This event is not your typical auction. The staff is small; about 30 people participated this year. We all bring in things to auction, including white elephant items, new items, handmade items and our famous coupon specials. The coupons can be redeemed anytime during the following year. Examples are coupons for Karen Harrington's incredible apple pie, which went for \$50 each. Seven were sold, and they'll be redeemed at the buyer's request with one-week's notice. Other coupon items included use of Bruce Schultz's trailer for hauling, pant-hemming services from Lynne Hall, Bob Savage's special strawberry roll-up cake and a variety of Marlene Seiler's yummy baked goods.

Prices are outrageous, but the money all goes to charity. The staff has a great time, and it's a real bonding experience for the staff as a team. This year, special thanks go to Jim Baird and Bob Savage, our capable and very entertaining auctioneers!

Thanks to DLEG staff who contributed to December's Casual Wednesday charity, the St. Vincent Home in Lansing. A total of \$1,725 was collected!

December Brings Out the Best in DLEG



Shelley Cease, Sarah Rockafellow and Andy Uzzle were instrumental in coordinating the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's Angel Tree with the Salvation Army.



The OFIS Giving Tree

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission's Fun Committee took the lead in organizing the collection drive. Members are, front row l. to r., Chris Volz and Bonnie Czaika; and back row, Kelly Straka, Susan Broughton and Arleen Platte.



December 2005 for **DLEG** employees was a month for giving. Here is a sampling of the generous **charitable activities** that took place across our department:

Workers' Compensation Agency and Wage and Hour Division employees **demonstrated** they knew the true meaning of the holiday season by choosing four organizations to **support**: **The Salvation Army**. Staff from the two agencies adopted 27 "angels" identified by the Salvation Army as being needy children and filled an entire van with **beautifully** wrapped presents. Lansing City Rescue Mission and Loaves & Fishes:

Staff provided hats, gloves, scarves, personal items, paper products, food and **cash donations** to these two **organizations**, which are dedicated to helping the needy and homeless in the Lansing area. **The Capital Area Humane Society (CAHS)**: Staff donated wrapping paper, bows, tape and scissors for the CAHS gift-wrapping **fundraiser** at the Lansing Mall. They also **collected** two big boxes full of food, toys, treats, towels and more. ... Employees at the **Michigan Public Service Commission** donated \$1,052 for the **Old Newsboys**, which purchases shoes and boots **for needy children**. ... **The Bureau of Commercial Services** adopted a family that included a mom and three **children**. Employees were invited to visit the bureau's **Giving Tree** to select a **family member's wish** tag, donate food items and/or give a **monetary donation**. ... The **Unemployment Insurance Agency's Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center's (RICC)** "Dress Down For A Cause" Committee selected two **charitable organizations** for the fourth quarter of 2005 and raised over a thousand dollars through **staff donations**. The two charities were **Most Holy Trinity Church Open Door Program** for Homeless Men and St. Leo's Catholic Church Soup Kitchen. At the request of the homeless **shelter**, the RICC purchased **nearly a \$1,000 worth of gloves**, underwear, socks, foot powder and rubbing alcohol.

St. Leo's received cases of canned vegetables, fruit and spices, worth over \$200. ... In its 23rd year, the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)** once again had a very **successful** food drive, **all donated** to the **Greater Lansing Area Food Bank**. Collected between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, a van full of food items along with close to \$100 was donated this year. MSHDA's Dale Norton and Jackie Blankenship **coordinated the efforts**. Also, the **Salvation Army** offers an Angel Tree sponsorship each year to provide Christmas presents to **needy children** in the Lansing area. Each child is given an "**angel**" that includes the needs and wishes of the kids. This year, **MSHDA employees** sponsored 55 angels. ... The **Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS)** put up a **Giving Tree** in **cooperation** with St. Vincent Catholic Charities. The tree was decorated with **angels** containing gift suggestions for children being sponsored by **St. Vincent**. OFIS has been doing this for the past five years or so, collecting 70 to 100 gifts each season. ... **The Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC)** staff and commissioners **brought in** **toys**, cash and gift cards during December to be donated to **Angel House**, a shelter in Mason for neglected and abused children. About 75 toys, games and art supplies were collected, along with a \$1,000 check. ... Also donating toys and checks to **Angel House** were employees at the **Central Office, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)**. **In addition**, MRS Central Office staff **donated \$300 to Habitat for Humanity** to assist those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. ... Staff of the **Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA)** sponsored a **family**

through the Capital Area **Salvation Army**. The project was kicked off Oct. 31 with a trick or treat for nonperishable food items. MIOSHA employees also **donated cash, toys and clothes** for the family, consisting of a mom and seven children. ... The **DLEG Ottawa Building Fun Committee** put up a **Giving Tree** that benefited two military families as well as four families identified by the **Cristo Rey Community Center**. The donated Christmas gifts **filled three vans**.

We Get Letters ... and E-mails!

A client of the Battle Creek office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) who has published his first novel, which is now in bookstores and available online, sent this e-mail message to Site Manager **Vicki Rafferty**: "Hello again. It's Albeo Levesque again. To make a long story short, because of [rehabilitation counselor] **John Bosker's** help in the past two years or so, I was able to accomplish writing and publishing my first novel. It's entitled 'The Last Vow.' I'm sending you an attachment with the front cover and the summary on the back cover. My novel is available now. The paperbacks will be in thousands of bookstores across the U.S. and Canada before the end of January. Once you see the cover, which my wife designed, you'll understand why I'm so excited. I thought you'd like to know good news for a change, instead of listening to complaints. Thank you for your time, Miss Rafferty."

Sanda Wiper, a counselor at MRS's Traverse City office, received a telephone call from a recent client who was proud to announce that she had been selected Stylist of the Year at Fantastic Sam's. "Her employer told her it was a unanimous award from the entire salon, including co-workers and management. Her haircuts, customer service and work ethic were outstanding," said Sanda, who noted that MRS had assisted the client with partial tuition at Traverse City Beauty College as well as other services.

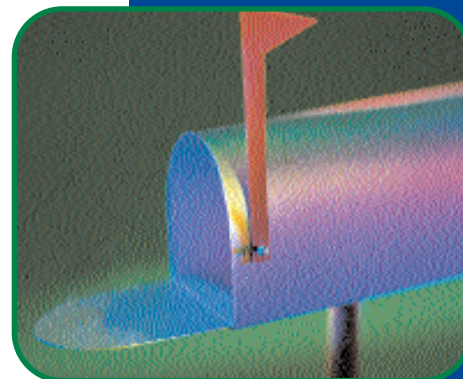
A client of MRS Lansing Office Counselor **Winona Potter** sent this letter: "I am writing this letter to make you aware of my appreciation for your help and continued support. Through the aid of your organization and your own generosity, you have helped greatly with tuition, books and various other financial needs. ... However, perhaps even more meaningful than mere finance, I thank you for your moral support and belief in what I was doing. When I informed you of my dreams and aspirations, you shared your reservations, but still stood by, helping to positively affirm that those thoughts and dreams were capable of being fulfilled. It is often easy to go through life, our various careers and occupations, never really becoming aware of how much we have touched and impacted someone else's life. I sincerely desire to make you aware, and if no one else has told you, I must confess, Mrs. Potter, you have significantly impacted and bettered my life. When I was away at college, just knowing that someone else was behind me, not only those related to me, was a great support in and of itself. ... When my history is all said and done if I reflect back on my wall of gratitude, it should be known that there will certainly be an indelible niche carved out by your generosity."

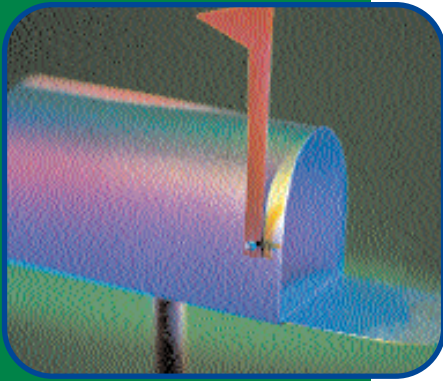
Bank staff: "Yesterday my prayers were answered and a company hired me. I am very thankful for all the hard work you do at the Michigan Talent Bank. A part of me will miss logging on and reviewing the many opportunities the MTB has to offer. I would recommend your services to anyone who is seeking employment. My family and I are most grateful and wish you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays this year. I know our season will be much brighter. God bless you all!"

Officials from UAW Locals 602 and 652 in Lansing recently wrote to the Unemployment Insurance Agency to express their appreciation for the exceptional service they received from the **Employer Filed Claims staff** and **Yolanda Beeks**, the unit's former manager. They wrote: "When we first became aware of impending layoffs, Ms. Beeks and her staff helped us to organize several informational meetings. They attended these meetings, explaining unemployment procedures and answering a great many questions. Our members were grateful for this information and have told us how much they enjoyed these opportunities. We have found Ms. Beeks and her staff to be extremely knowledgeable on contractual issues facing our members relative to unemployment. They have gone above and beyond to provide service to our Locals and assist in any way possible. It has been a pleasure to work with this fine group of people."

Chris Morano, senior safety officer, General Industry Safety and Health Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) recently conducted an inspection at a restaurant in Norton Shores. The employer's abatement letter contained this complimentary message: "I would like to take the time to thank the inspector, Christopher Morano, for his professionalism and useful advice on how to improve our standards in the workplace. I have taken the advice and implemented changes in accordance with our citations."

Bill Wilhelm, Compliance/Legal Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, was complimented in this letter from a satisfied customer: "I was extremely impressed with the way Mr. Wilhelm handled the meeting. He conducted it in a very professional manner — he clearly explained the purpose of the meeting and the options available to both sides. He then facilitated the discussions in a persuasive manner, encouraging us to reach an agreement. He skillfully guided each of us when we were off base, pointing out the value of reaching a settlement. When strong emotions were expressed, he effectively diffused them and brought the discussion back on topic. Because of Mr. Wilhelm's leadership, I believe we will be able to resolve the issues amicably."





[More] Letters ... and E-mails!

Jean Boven, director of Licensing, Bureau of Commercial Services, received a letter from a customer related to his application for business licensure: "I want to thank you for your efficient and professional assistance in processing our application for a builder's license. NVR Inc. is excited about the growth opportunities in Michigan and looks forward to contributing to Michigan's bright future. Your assistance obviously was invaluable in our ability to process the builder's license in a timely fashion, and we are grateful for your efforts on our behalf."

Rita Burnett, Licensing Division/Real Estate Board, Bureau of Commercial Services, recently received two complimentary e-mail messages from customers: "Thank you so much, Dear Rita. You are so great, so prompt. I wish everybody was like you." And: "Thank you so much for the promptness in handling this matter. I appreciate the personalization you have given. It is so nice to know there are nice people out there, whether over the phone or via e-mail."

Workers' Comp and Wage & Hour Employees Hold Holiday Taste Fest

By **Sandy Adams**, Workers' Compensation Agency

In keeping with the spirit of the holiday season, the Workers' Compensation Agency and Wage & Hour Division staff in the General Office Building, Lansing, held their annual Goodie Day Dec. 6.



Lori Jenkins' olive-and-cream cheese penguins captured first place in the food competition.

Everyone worked extra hard this year to make his or her favorite holiday food dish in order to capture one of the prizes. Each first, second, third and fourth place winner received a \$25 gift certificate from Speedway, while the fifth place winner received a \$10 gift certificate from Wendy's. The administrative staff in both agencies donated the prizes.

First prize went to Lori Jenkins for her clever olive-and-cream cheese penguins. The other contest winners were Diane Harger, Wendy Beam, Margaret Fenby and Dan Moreno.

All were winners, however, as the food was amazing! A number of retirees attended, and it was great to share old times. In keeping with tradition, there was also a gift exchange to brighten everyone's day.

Luck of the Draw

Robin Thiemann with Finance & Administrative Services was the lucky winner of DLEG's Christmas wreath drawing last month. A beautiful wreath created by DLEG retiree Nancy Benjamin was raffled off for \$1 a ticket, and \$5 for 6. The wreath raffle netted \$52 for the DLEG Fun Committee at the Ottawa Building, which sponsors charitable and staff support activities throughout the year.



Robin Thiemann